

## [Awkward Silences by Luddleston](#)

**Category:** Welcome to Night Vale

**Genre:** M/M

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Carlos (Welcome to Night Vale), Cecil (Welcome to Night Vale)

**Relationships:** Carlos/Cecil (Welcome to Night Vale)

**Status:** Completed

**Published:** 2013-09-09

**Updated:** 2013-09-09

**Packaged:** 2022-12-19 11:36:23

**Rating:** General Audiences

**Warnings:** No Archive Warnings Apply

**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 1,289

**Publisher:** archiveofourown.org

**Summary:**

Neither of them are the most socially competent people, but Carlos and Cecil try to make things work.

## Awkward Silences

### Author's Note:

- For [MurphyAT](#).

More fluff written when I probably should have been doing something else. Brie, sorry you're an intern but hey, you don't die.

Carlos was no stranger to awkward silences, in fact, he had probably perfected the art of them long ago. He was still devastated by how terribly uncomfortable he became in social situations, always cynically describing himself as “good with science, bad with people”. Somehow, that slight hesitance he always experienced in conversation was multiplied tenfold when it came to one person.

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Cecil could talk like he was going to run out of air, which made sense considering his occupation. He had this awful tendency to never let anyone get a word in edgewise when he was excited about something (which was always embarrassing). He felt like an idiot when he started babbling about some dumb thing, but it was particularly bad when he was talking to a specific person.

(“Neat.” He still couldn’t believe he said that.)

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“A scientist is self-reliant,” Carlos mocked himself, flopping rather gracelessly onto his couch with his notes, which were daringly written in ball-point pen. He was starting to run out of pens and when he tried to order them online, every website claimed his address in Night Vale didn’t exist. It probably had something to do with the fact that Night Vale’s zip code was a seemingly random combination of unusual, non-Romanized symbols that changed at least once a week. He sighed loudly, the sound cutting through the buzzing from the three fans Carlos had set up in his apartment. Despite

the fact that he had air conditioning, the heat from all the instruments in the lab always rose up into his apartment, making it so devastatingly hot that Carlos had developed a new tendency of sleeping in only his boxers.

He glanced at his phone, wondering why he was considering calling Cecil at this time of night. His show had just ended, so Carlos couldn't make the excuse of calling to tell Cecil something about his newest scientific discovery just to hear Cecil's calming, sonorous voice. Which he did do sometimes. Carlos didn't think it really mattered to the citizens of Night Vale that clocks didn't work, since no one really seemed to mind, but Cecil thought it was fascinating and his voice would do the thing where it all bubbled up because he was so excited and Carlos was already dialing.

This was probably a bad idea.

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Cecil was walking out of the radio station's front door when his phone started buzzing in his pocket. He nearly jumped out of his skin at the sudden vibration, glancing around as he pulled his phone out of his pocket in hopes that no one had noticed. He still didn't have caller i.d., so he picked it up with a simple, "hello?"

"Cecil?"

He had to contain himself from jumping around in glee because intern Brianna was walking out of the station behind him and she would probably give him that look of consternation she always made whenever someone was doing something unusual. And obviously, a grown man squealing like a little girl because his boyfriend (boyfriend. That idea still made his heart flutter) called him was sort of odd.

"Carlos!" Cecil finally replied, internally cursing himself for how breathless he sounded.

There was a long pause, and Carlos's shaky breath came through the phone next before, "Cecil... would you like to come over to my lab? I understand

it's late, but..." he trailed off, and Cecil waited, wondering if he was going to finish that sentence.

"Yes, of course! I'm just headed out of work, so I'll be a few minutes, but, oh, Carlos, thank you for the invitation," Cecil said. Intern Brianna had already disappeared into the unknown, so Cecil had no reservations about skipping on his way to his car. "I'll be on my way soon," he trilled, "do you want me to bring snacks?"

Carlos made a soft noise that might have been a laugh. "No."

Cecil sang to himself as he drove. It was very off-key, and he was glad Carlos couldn't hear him.

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Carlos considered cleaning up the apartment above his lab before Cecil dropped by, but he couldn't bring himself to move. It was too sticky and hot for him to do much of anything, even though night had just fallen (he would probably wake up shivering in the middle of the night because it always got so cold at night). He tried to think of appropriate topics of conversation to talk about with Cecil, and realized that he only ever talked about his experiments and science and he groaned to himself because he really was the world's worst conversationalist. Cecil sometimes talked about the goings-on in town, which just made Carlos's head spin and he just said "mm-hm" every so often and nodded, paying more attention to the movements of Cecil's mouth and the intonations of his voice. It was much easier to deal with all of the insanity that Night Vale would have eventually caused him when he tried to ignore at least some of the madness. Cecil didn't seem to notice all the time when Carlos did that. Sometimes he would stop talking and just stare, like Carlos's reaction was extremely inappropriate, and Carlos felt embarrassed because he should have been listening.

There was a knock on the door before Carlos could even get back to thinking about whether he should bring up something about the levitating cat, and he jolted and almost fell off the couch. He jumped up and darted to the door, pulling it open to see a grinning, slightly starstruck-looking Cecil

standing there. “Carlos,” Cecil said, and Carlos couldn’t think of what he was supposed to say in response to that because Cecil was just so astonishing.

“Oh, um, come in,” Carlos said quietly, feeling like he was mumbling, and he stepped out of the doorway.

Cecil was still giving him that bright smile, and Carlos felt very much on the verge of swooning, and he brushed a stray hair out of his face in an effort to bring himself back to earth. Cecil just seemed more enthralled by him, and Carlos was abruptly reminded of Ceil’s apparent fascination with his hair. “How was your day?” Cecil asked politely, while the two of them went to sit on the couch.

“Uneventful,” Carlos replied, swallowing hard when Cecil leaned against his side and put his arm through Carlos’s. Normally, Carlos wasn’t one to have an abnormally large personal space bubble, but when it came to Cecil, he always found himself blushing and nervous. Cecil’s touches were always so comfortable though, like when he leaned his head on Carlos’s shoulder or bent over to whisper in his ear. “How was yours?” Carlos said once he collected himself, cursing the stutter that crept into his voice.

“The usual, I suppose,” Cecil replied, reaching down and running his fingertips over Carlos’s knuckles.

“The usual” could very well have meant that there were giant armadillos roaming town, although that had happened last week and Carlos was pretty sure they had gotten rid of them, or that a five-headed dragon had been elected mayor. “Uneventful” was defined as Carlos spending most of his day trying to figure out why all of Night Vale’s children were all turning orange. But that didn’t matter because Cecil was holding Carlos’s hand.

There was another lengthy silence, but this time it wasn’t the awkward silence of nothing happening and both parties trying to think of something to say but not getting it past their lips. It was a comfortable silence of two people who were at peace with each other and with the quiet. Somewhere in the quiet, Cecil’s lips met Carlos’s, the sound of him humming softly into Carlos’s mouth lost in the buzz of the three fans.